

1501140

**City of Merrill
Personnel and Finance Committee
Tuesday, January 6, 2015 at 5:00 P.M.
Basement Conference Room at City Hall, 1004 East First Street**

Voting Members Present (3 of 3): Alderman Ryan Schwartzman (Chairperson), Alderman John Burgener and Alderman Tim Meehean.

Others Present Included: City Administrator Dave Johnson, Mayor Bill Bialecki, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, Police Chief Ken Neff, Fire Chief Dave Savone, Utility Superintendent Kriewald, Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Darin Pagel, Library Director Stacy Stevens, Alderwoman Kandy Peterson, Alderman Dave Sukow, Corey Bennett, Kortney Pike, Roger Drewek, Diane Wais, Jeremy Ratliff and City Clerk Bill Heideman. A student was in attendance to videotape the meeting for the Cable Access Channel.

Call to order

Alderman Schwartzman called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M.

Vouchers

The vouchers had been e-mailed to the three committee members and are available to the public on the City webpage.

Motion (Burgener/Meehean) to approve the vouchers. Carried.

Consider grant acceptance policy

This issue was originally discussed at the December 2nd, 2014 Personnel and Finance Committee meeting. At that meeting, it was suggested that City Administrator Johnson draft a revised policy and submit it to the committee.

City Administrator Johnson has now drafted a revised policy, which was included in the meeting packet. The revised policy stipulates that, prior to submitting grant applications, the submitting Department Head shall meet with the City Administrator and review the nature of the grant application.

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Motion (Meehean/Burgener) to approve the grant acceptance policy, as submitted by City Administrator Johnson. Carried.

Consider filling vacant Police Department Administrative Assistant position

City Administrator Johnson reported that he had previously been directed to conduct research and submit recommendations on two Administrative Assistant positions, one in the Police Department and one in the Fire Department. The full-time position in the Police Department recently became vacant as the result of a retirement. The Fire Department position would be a new, part-time position.

City Administrator Johnson is recommending that the Police Department position be filled on a part-time basis, 28 hours per week. He stated that that his research did reveal that he was not aware of the amount of work that is done by the Police Department Administrative Assistants. However, he added that there would be significant savings if the position were filled on a part-time basis, in which case the position would not include employee benefits. He suggested that the savings realized by filling this position only part-time could be used to pay for the part-time Fire Department Administrative Assistant position (Grade 4) that he is proposing.

Alderman Sukow requested and was granted permission to speak. His recollection was the Common Council had eliminated the Police Department position during the 2015 budget process, and therefore he asked why the position was still budgeted. He added that the Common Council had twice voted down the proposed Fire Department Administrative Assistant position, and wondered why it was still being proposed.

Alderman Sukow then offered a suggestion that the part-time Police Department Administrative Assistant position and the vacant part-time Utility Administrative Assistant position could be combined into one position, with one person splitting time between the Police Department and the Utility.

City Administrator Johnson disagreed with Alderman Sukow on the Police Department Administrative Assistant position. It was his recollection that, although the hiring freeze was not lifted to fill the position, the position was not eliminated. Rather, he was to conduct research on both the Police Department Administrative Assistant position and the proposed Fire Department Administrative Assistant position.

Alderman Burgener and Alderman Schwartzman both stated that they were not in favor of combining the Police Department and Utility Administrative Assistant positions.

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Motion (Meehean/Burgener) to approve the recommendation from City Administrator Johnson to fill a recently vacated Police Department Administrative Assistant position on a part-time basis, 28 hours per week, at Grade 5 on the Clerical and Other Support Personnel Pay Schedule. Carried.

Consider creating and filling Fire Department Administrative Assistant position

As noted above, City Administrator Johnson is recommending that a Fire Department Administrative Assistant position be created and filled on a 20 hours per week basis.

Motion (Schwartzman/Meehean) to refer to the 2016 budget process.
Carried.

Consider reclassification request for City Attorney Administrative Assistant

Alderman Schwartzman noted that the agenda included six reclassification requests. He stated that he would favor just an overview and information gathering at this meeting, with no decisions made until the next meeting in late January.

Alderman Meehean stated that, in lieu of considering individual reclassification requests, he would prefer a formal salary study of all City positions. He acknowledged that there are current inequities, but he does not think that addressing positions in a piecemeal fashion would necessarily resolve those inequities. City Administrator Johnson responded that, if decisions are made on the pending reclassifications, the inequities would be resolved.

Alderman Meehean stated that the current pay scales may be too high or they may be too low, he does not know. He added that accounting duties are vastly different than bookkeeping duties.

Alderman Sukow stated that, if a salary study is done, every City position should be compared to what other municipalities are paying for similar positions/duties. Alderman Meehean and Alderman Sukow both stated that the employee benefits must be included in any comparative salary study.

Alderman Meehean stated that he has nothing against any current City employee in any position, but that the current system may not be providing justice.

Alderman Sukow suggested that the Community Development Administrator/Zoning Assistant position and the Utility Superintendent position be researched for possible adjustments.

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Motion (Meehean/Schwartzman) to delay consideration of any position reclassifications and instead propose a formal, independent salary study of all City positions. Carried.

Consider reclassification request for Utility Administrative Assistant

See motion #1501143.

Consider reclassification request for Finance Administrative Assistant

See motion #1501143.

Consider reclassification request for Comm. Dev Admin./Zoning Assistant

See motion #1501143.

Consider reclassification request for Finance Secretary (full-time)

See motion #1501143.

Consider reclassification request for Finance Secretary (part-time)

See motion #1501143.

Monthly Report – Municipal Court

The report was in the meeting packet.

Monthly Report – Finance Director Unertl

The report was in the meeting packet. Finance Director Unertl reported that she is currently addressing several financial issues related to the airport. She added that the Airport Commission has scheduled a meeting for January 7th to address similar issues.

Monthly Report – City Attorney Hayden

The report was in the meeting packet.

Monthly Report – City Clerk Heideman

The report was in the meeting packet. City Clerk Heideman stated that, at this time it is unclear whether a Spring Primary Election will be necessary. If one is required, it will be held on February 17th.

City Clerk Heideman is drafting a guide and a “script” that could be used during public hearings, to ensure that hearings are conducted as efficiently as possible. He will submit those documents to City Administrator Johnson for review and consideration.

Monthly Report – City Administrator Johnson

The report was in the meeting packet.

Next meeting

Tuesday, January 27th, 2015 at 5:15 P.M.

Public Comment

Alderman Sukow thanked and complimented Alderman Meehean for his comments related to reclassifications and a potential salary study.

Motion to convene in closed session

Motion (Meehean/Burgener) to convene in closed session pursuant to Wisconsin State Statutes Section 19.85(1)(g), to confer with legal counsel for the governmental body who is rendering oral or written advice concerning strategy to be adopted by the body with respect to litigation in which it is or is likely to become involved, to consider possible settlement related to pending litigation related to zoning regulations and enforcement and to convene in closed session pursuant to Wisconsin State Statutes Section 19.85(1)(f), to consider financial, medical, social or personal histories or disciplinary data of specific persons, preliminary consideration of specific personnel problems or the investigation of charges against specific persons, which, if discussed in public, would be likely to have a substantial adverse effect upon the reputation of any person referred to in such histories or data, or involved in such problems or investigations, to discuss medical histories, medical conditions and related items, for two City employees. Carried 3-0 on roll call vote.

This closed session began at 6:12 P.M. Attending: Schwartzman, Burgener, Meehean, Sukow, Johnson, Hayden, Unertl, Pagel, Savone and Heideman.

Closed session #1

The minutes for this closed session will be filed separately and confidentially.

Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Pagel departed at the conclusion of closed session #1.

Closed session #2

This closed session began at 6:21 P.M. The minutes for this closed session will be filed separately and confidentially.

Adjournment

Motion (Burgener/Meehean) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned (from closed session) at 6:42 P.M.

Minutes prepared and submitted by:

William N. Heideman, CMC, WCMC
City Clerk